

**Recap of September 9, 2004, Meeting
Information Service Policy Committee
1:00pm Large Conference Room, Information Services**

Attendees:

Don Herz, Ray Stevens, Randy Ober, Terry Lowe, Douglas Thomas, Ken Kuszak

Administrative:

User Training;

Since Deb Torgler resigned, Information Services is no longer providing in-house training. Doug is trying to get something set up with the State. He has e-mailed Jim Pritchard, (State IT Training Coordinator), a couple of times and has not received a response from him. Doug is hoping that we can tie onto the State's CBT training. We did something similar to this two years ago and it cost us \$11,000 for the City Finance Department and the County Board/Budget and Clerk's Offices to have training over there. At that time it did not get used much so we didn't pursue it any further. Doug is going to try and get a per pupil type class, (pay by class as we use it), arrangement with them if possible. If this can't be arranged then we'll look at doing something through a local training organization. It was suggested that Doug contact Tom Conroy at the State since Jim isn't responding.

Networking:

ADSL;

All of the fire stations are converted to ADSL, except for Station 10 and that is because Alltel has to do some additional wiring within that station. It is Doug's understanding that things are working better than they were under Time Warner and better than they were under the 56k lines. Plus the 56k lines were significantly more costly. We met with Alltel yesterday and we are putting together a list of the next group to be put on ADSL.

MPLS;

Currently, all of our frame relay and ADSL lines actually terminate at Information Services. By having all the lines terminate here we are required to have a router to handle all this and we have to pay \$20,000 per year for maintenance on the router. The MPLS would allow us to have everything terminate at 15th & M. This change in termination point would allow us to get rid of our router and not pay the maintenance on it. It would come across the fiber connection between Alltel and our network. It allows for more "tuning" on the lines and devices, as well as quality of service monitoring. We are going to continue to work with their engineers to see what the cost of this service might be and compare it to the \$20,000 maintenance that we could save. The router is getting very old and we are either going to have to replace it in the next couple of years or go with this type of service.

Parks Wireless;

The radios are installed and Brian Schwinck is working on the migration over to wireless. He is working on getting actual IP clients installed at Parks.

Public Works Wireless/Landfill;

This wireless was working fine until yesterday and someone in that area installed another radio of unknown origin to us, and it scrambled our signals. This is one of the problems with utilizing non-regulated wireless frequencies. They are coming back and are going to turn our antennas upside down, which will change the polarity on the radios. They had to do this at the Parks Department too, they invert the antennas and that reverses the polarity on the radio systems and they work. They seem to be working fine at Parks after this was done.

ISP Services;

The ISP Services contract with Alltel has been signed. This will be a newer service than we have now and will allow for some quality of service with the new equipment, they can dedicate the true 10 meg to us. If we want to go to 12 meg or up, they will not have to switch out equipment like they did in the past. They can re-tune the equipment so it makes the cost to opt up to a higher bandwidth cheaper.

Remote Access;

The networking and the microcomputer people are working on coming up with a standard for Remote Access to the network through the web. Right now we have several different methods and it is becoming increasingly difficult to manage. We would like to establish a standard and stick to it. We will be establishing this standard in the next couple of months.

Information Center:**County Assessor;**

The hardware for the County Assessor's OASIS/ORION migration has been ordered. The desktops actually came in yesterday. The servers have been ordered, one is in and the rest should be in soon, possibly as early as next week. We ended up getting five servers. Initially, they wanted nine servers which included the hardware for the tax side too. Since tax is not going to be implemented for at least a year or longer, we convinced them to hold off on purchasing these. We are hoping that we can reuse the integration servers that we are using on the CAMA side as the tax integration servers so that they may only have to purchase two more servers to meet their needs. Rob had inquired to Robin, (CLT/Tyler Project Manager), on where the licenses were. In the contract with CLT, they are to provide the operating system software and the database software as part of their contract. This totals about \$15,000-\$20,000 dollars in software. Robin from CLT responded that was fine, they need access to the servers to install this software. However, Ken would prefer to have the licenses before the software is installed because we will need proof of ownership.

County Commissioners Meeting;

Doug will be gone next week and Ken will attend the Commissioners meeting in his place. We do have problems with people who want to be their own purchasing agents and spec out Dells and then wonder why Ken adds a percentage onto his prices. What they do not consider is that we still have to issue the purchase order, we have to pay the finance department for all of the documents we process, (Requisitions, Purchase Orders, Payment Vouchers, Treasurer's Receipts etc), plus we have to pay for Ken's time, which is not billed and for Sandy's time to check in the equipment. In addition, we store it pending installation, maintain inventory and ultimately handle all the surplus processes. It would not make sense for the IBM platform to support the purchase side of PC's, the agencies purchasing the PC's are the ones benefitting, so they should pay the cost of getting them. Typically, when agencies do their own "shopping" they are looking at non-network tested consumer grade PCs. Not business class machines, (which is all we purchase). Dells consumer grade machines, are probably a little cheaper than what we are currently purchasing. We do not even look at consumer grade machines, we look at business grade machines. Typically there are absolutely no warranty provisions with regard to networking of consumer grade machines. Clearly 99.99% of our machines need to have network capabilities. It has been about a year since Ken has checked into the price of comparable Dell machines and at that time they were a little higher priced. One of the things to remember is that we are HP certified and our staff can work on the machines and we are reimbursed from HP on warranty work. They reimburse them for our time and we have parts here because we have so many of them.

Evidently, Jim Langtry had some questions as to why we were getting HPs versus Dell's and how

we could charge extra because he is the one who configured (spec'd), the machine and not Ken. Vince fights with different departments who want to act as their own purchasing agents and when you have an expert in this area, it does not make sense to allow everyone to make their own purchases. We are currently paying \$750 per PC. Ken is not going to try and justify their need for flat screens, he will leave that to the Engineer. The 911 Center does purchase Dell's, it is what their vendor recommends. They do most of their own maintenance there. If Jim wants Dell's, we will purchase them but if they go down, the response time will not be as fast on getting them fixed since we don't stock parts for them here at IS.

Oracle;

We are looking at Building & Safety, Water, Wastewater, TRIMS, having redundant servers here in a Microsoft environment. By getting away from a UNIX/SUN environment and going to an HP full windows environment, we can have full server redundancy for considerable less cost than UNIX/SUN. We are also looking at having redundant DNS/DHCP hardware at the County Engineer. This would reduce the impact if we weren't able to get to our IS facilities at 233 South 10th. We have our failures when the operating system goes down, and with this type of cluster configuration, it will automatically switch over to the other machine. There would be a minimal, perhaps one minute down time and then we are running again. Departments may have an option to purchase machines that could be hooked up to this server for their use in the event of a failure, (warm workstations). It will also give us a test site. If our building is wiped out it will take some amount of time to be back up and running at our disaster recovery site.

Cherry Creek - Disaster Recovery;

The disaster recovery site at the Extension Office is pretty much developed now. We have it all laid out, the electrical is there, the lines are there, the networking is there, the panels are there, the switch is there. We have discontinued our other disaster recovery services. What is left is running the individual lines. Dave Drevo is working on building the cables and Public Works is making a cart to hold all of the channel cables.

Elections Printing;

Elections had a Xerox printer that we ordered for them to replace an older printer and it was tearing the "perfs" out on the registration cards. Ken talked to Xerox about it and they told him this printer was not meant to print perforated forms, it would handle heavy cardstock but not perforated forms. They had this printer hooked up to an HP jet direct and their protocol is a little different than HP's so they recommended that we get their new printer with their own (Xerox), jet direct. We ordered a Xeros 4500N printer, which was a little bit more money, and it has been working great. One of the reasons it does not tear, is you put the registration cards in sideways on this printer. Dave at Elections said this printer is working great. They need to get away from these heavy duty cards. One of the reasons they use these cards is because their expensive file cabinets (Lectreivers), were made to hold these cards. They are also saving the cards electronically.

IP Printing;

We are phasing out IPX Novell printing and going strictly to IP. Tim Storer and Tom Svehla have been testing this out and working out the bugs. Monday we got Parks & Rec on 27th and A printing IP now and it is working fine. We are going to start moving people off of IPX. The users will not notice a difference.

Systems Development;

County Attorney Web Request;

Gary Lacey called Doug this morning and he was upset because he cannot have his web pages look like the Manhattan District Attorney, (major flash presentation upon clicking the County Attorney

page). Evidently, Gary went out and took pictures all over Lincoln that he wants to be part of this site. David Jane showed Terry a stack of photos. Doug told Gary that there are a number of reasons we place restrictions on how City/County web pages look. One is we are trying to keep some uniformity from department to department. We have not been one to do a lot of "flash"/promotion,, we have been content oriented and concerned with the speed of loading, as many remote users do not have high speed connections. Gary said everyone has DSL or Roadrunner, the latest study was the year 2000 from the feds and 85% was dial up at that time, it has probably changed. A good percentage of your people are not on Roadrunner or DSL. The proposed pages would violate four out of the ten "Top 10 Website Sins" to want to be able to do this. Load time, media over kill, splash screens that exist merely to point to another web page. These screens do not do anything. Another thing is, we have gotten the consistency with the heading at the top, so there are pull down boxes, it is very fast loading. It is not flashy but we have not gotten any complaints about it loading too slow. We have been a content based website and have stayed away from a lot of animation. Gary's pages typically get 4,000 hits which are a drop in the bucket compared to the 9 million hits received overall. He does have a new application coming out. His picture is on his web page and we have no problem with him doing a video clip explaining the responsibilities of the office and what they do. All his information is for the general public now, there is information about how to file a protection order. The new application will have a place to see when you go to court. Every image or object on a page counts as a hit even though they are on the same page. The four thousand hits may really relate to only 1,000 pages loads. It is a lesser used site. This has more to do with cosmetics. The idea is one search engine, one look and feel, allow the public to get the information they want and not slow the process down by cosmetics. Gary told Doug he had money in his budget for these changes. David can put it together in a day or two, it will not cost a lot. The WAC required the ribbon on the top, the second part was highly recommended and anything in the middle is fair game. We may look at the option of having a click on the standard page that takes you to a flash introduction. This way the user could determine if they wanted to see it or not, (ie wanted to wait for it to load.)

County Assessor;

Based on our cursory review, the presentation of this application looked good. We do not know what the public component will look like.

City ACTION;

Information went out to all City departments this week. Terry Lowe has received some calls on it.

County PeopleSoft Project;

Nobu has been very knowledgeable and helpful. We have made a lot of progress in the last day and a half. Dave wants a name of someone he can contact when things are not working and Mark is unable to fix the problems. Nobu says that we need to be talking to our sales guy to get contact information, but he is no longer with PeopleSoft. We are feeling better about the client installs because Nobu is going through and fixing the problems. We have yet to work with him on the "WebSphere" and have mainly been working on documenting the install of fat client. Randy will be meeting with Nobu tomorrow. Dave has not seen a bill yet and he expects to see a break down and some adjustments on this billing. Mark is still confident that the deadlines will be made. Dave has only used the address book and added accounts. Liz is planning on loading data this week. We took a gig of storage out of a shared pool to dedicate to the web services facility. Just before noon, Liz tried adding accounts, she had three that were added instantly and the next one took two minutes to load. We have done what IBM has recommended and this is putting it (WebSphere), off by itself. The address book part is very fast. Fat clients seem to be clean now that everything is working but the web interface piece still has a mixed response time. Mark with PeopleSoft is not willing to help them resolve this problem. He will not even make calls about it. Randy called this problem in last week and still has not received a call back. Randy wants to know the name of another PeopleSoft

site or two that is running websphere on their AS/400. Mark should be able to get us in contact with a sales person. We set it up this way to avoid buying two Intel web servers, however, we wanted to run the webserver on the AS/400 and avoid buying the second web server.

Health;

This project is still going poorly.

Applicant Tracking;

This project is going well, we hoped to have the web components done by the end of the month.

ePay Parking,

Going well.

Parking Tickets;

We finally settled on RECOM as in field parking ticket unit. The fire department is also looking at this device for field use. The cost is \$1,100 equiped with wireless equipment. Cheaper than laptops and mobile data terminals.

Tech Support/Operation:

We had another big month on CICS transactions. The Assessor and Elections had another 5.2 million transactions.

Next Meeting:

October 14, 2004